

ARTICLES FROM THE PERSUADER VOLUME VII

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ARTICLES FROM **THE PERSUADER** VOLUME 7

The articles in this book appeared in our semi-annual paper, **THE PERSUADER**, from 2008 to 2012. They were written by Edgar Lee Paschall, Pastor of New Hope Baptist Church, unless otherwise designated. These articles are designed to persuade one to take a fresh look at TRUTH and to RIGHTLY DIVIDE God's Word. If we can be of help in any way, please feel free to call or write. If you need more copies of this book or any of our other books please write to the above address. These books are free as long as funds are available to keep printing them. Use the material in this book any way that brings honor and glory to our Lord.

Because of Calvary,
Edgar Lee Paschall

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COUNT THE COST

"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Phil. 3:7-8

Paul speaks very plainly in this verse that he counted the cost to be saved. If Paul counted the cost, then every person that is saved also has to count the cost, because the Word of God says Paul is a pattern to all who are saved. I Tim. 1:16: "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." This being so, I wanted to look at three things involved in counting the cost--What? When? And Why?

1. What?

What did Paul count loss?--all things as our text states. "Count" means to consider, deem, and think. The "all things" refers to the things of the flesh. Phil. 3:4: "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more." These were things he had counted gain. They refer to his social pedigree or status in the Jewish world listed in Phil. 3:5-6. "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." He counted all these things (plural) as loss (singular) for Christ.

2. When?

The tense of "counted" in our text is a perfect tense verb in the Greek. This means a past completed action in past time with existing results. When was this point in past time? In Acts 9 the Lord revealed Himself to Paul (Saul) and told him what to do after he asked "What wilt thou have me do?" (Acts 9:6) He obeyed and went into the city of Damascus and lodged for three days on the street called Straight. It was during these three days that Paul counted the cost and came to the conclusion that all the things he had gained in the flesh was but "dung"--refuse, rubbish, that which is thrown to the dogs, something thrown out as worthless. Phil. 3:8: "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." When he came to this conclusion, he needed more instruction and the Lord sent a human instrument, Ananias, to tell him what to do. Paul testified of this in Acts 22:16. ("And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.") His sins were washed away by calling on the name of the Lord not by the baptism water. Paul was saved when Ananias came to him on the street called Straight after three days of counting the cost.

3. Why?

Why did Paul count the cost?--that he might "win Christ." (Phil 3:8) "Win" means to gain, to acquire, or simply put means to be saved. When an accountant takes inventory, he gets rid of those things that would not do him any good in the long haul. Paul just junked all things to be saved.

Again I ask why? Because he was under Holy Ghost conviction. The reason being three fold: 1) He had heard Stephen preach, 2) He had heard Stephen pray, and 3) He watched Stephen die. (Acts 7) This caused Paul, after the Lord revealed Himself to him, to take inventory for three days and he came to a point he chose to junk all things--all of his self-righteousness, all of his pedigree--just to have Christ who is eternal life. John 1:4: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." He had the Word before and being a Pharisee he knew it backward and forward. But life is not in the written Word. John 5:39-40: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." I John 5:12: "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. The written Word is a pointer to the Living Word. John 1:4: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." He had works but said "What must I do?" John 6:28-29: "Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." He had not believed on the Lord Jesus. He knew there was a price to pay and He counted the cost that he might be saved.

The Lord told us to count the cost to be His disciple. Luke 14:26,27,33: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." These verses are not talking about some second work of grace after one is saved but they refer to being saved, being His true disciple.

Sometimes service is connected with salvation. It was with Paul as he testified before Agrippa in Acts 26:16-18. ("But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Paul knew what he would face if he carried the gospel to the Gentiles--the scorn of the Jews just as he had done to others when he was kicking against conviction. But after three days he came to a conclusion. Phil. 3:8: "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."

In Paul's life, we can see clearly that he counted the cost for three days. But sometimes I believe there is a gradual yielding and submitting in one's life even long before they are saved. It is so gradual that you may not even think of it as counting the cost but it is. Counting the cost is necessary for one to be saved and it is worthy of all the time necessary to do so.

Let me add this. If you ever count the cost and are willing to count all things loss for salvation, there won't be any problem of yielding to the service of the Lord, because He is Lord. I'm referring to His call on your life whether it be preaching or a homemaker, whether He is telling you what to wear or how to live. There is not a problem yielding because you have already counted the cost. I have heard some say, "I fought the call to preach for years." That is not scriptural, for if one counts the cost for salvation then preaching is not a problem when the Lord calls.

Count the cost. He'll enable you to do so and enable you to be willing to pay the price, and you will not regret it.

This article is a shortened form of a message preached on this subject. If you would like a cassette or cd of this message, please let me know. If we can be of help in any way, please feel free to contact us.

THE PERSUADER - OCT.-DEC., 2008

THE HORSES ARE COMING

"If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses?...." Jer. 12:5a

Our text was spoken by the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet during the latter part of King Josiah's reign over Judah. His reign in Judah was a good reign. He had restored true worship to Judah and it was a time of revival, peace, and prosperity in the nation. Many of the people were just following the king's convictions since they had none of their own. They were giving lip service and not heart service. It was to this people the Lord had sent Jeremiah.

His ministry was an unusual ministry as Jer. 1:10 states plainly. ("See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant." Jer. 1:10) No doubt many of the people said, "Things are going well in Judah now." "Times are good, no wars, prosperous times, don't rock the boat." Seems like after about 10 to 15 years of this type of ministry Jeremiah questions God in Jer. 1:1-4: (verse 1 "Righteous art thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?" verse 2 "Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins." verse 3 "But thou, O LORD, knowest me: thou hast seen me, and tried mine heart toward thee: pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter." verse 4 "How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? the beasts are consumed, and the birds; because they said, He shall not see our last end.") Why do the wicked prosper? Why are the treacherous happy? (verse 1) He acknowledges that God is righteous (verse 1) and in control. (verse 2) He also acknowledges the people were giving lip service and not heart (reins) service. (verse 2) Again he questions in verse 4: How long are you going to let this go on? Stating that even the birds suffer when famine comes as punishment.

Basically Jeremiah was saying, "Lord, the people are unconcerned. They will not heed my message. They do not want the truth. They cannot see what I am talking about." He got so frustrated and discouraged that it came to the point that He was just going to quit preaching. (Jer. 20:7-9a: "O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived; thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me. For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name.") But he could not because "His word was in mine heart as a

burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." Jer. 20: 9b

Jeremiah had a lot of frustrations and problems but the Lord rebuked him in Jer. 12: 5a, our text, as He stated this proverbial expression. The unconcern of the people was only a footman. The hatred of truth of the people was only a footman. Wickedness prospering was only a footman. If footmen are wearing you down, what will you do when the horses come? The horses are coming! The Lord was saying to Jeremiah "If you can not stand true to God during the time of the peaceful reign of Josiah, what will you do when the wicked kings--Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah--begin to rule?" "If you can not serve God in time of peace, what will you think you would do in the time of captivity?" The Lord knew what was ahead and was rebuking Jeremiah for looking at the people and the problems instead of looking at the Lord. "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." II Cor. 10: 12

I can identify with Jeremiah. The footmen have wearied me. ("Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes." SOS 2: 15) Therefore, the Lord's rebuke can be applied to us today. What are you going to do when the horses come? The thing is, they are coming! In contending with the horses in Zedekiah's day, Jeremiah was lied upon and put in prison. (Jer. 37: 11-15, 21; 38: 6: "Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that was in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.") Then he went to Egypt with the captives who fled their homeland. He was their voice there. It seems he learned to contend with the footmen, so that he was able to contend with the horses when they came. He learned his resource was in God alone.

How does this apply to us? America cannot go on in wickedness without God's judgment. The pendulum has already began to swing to the side of judgment for our nation. I do not know what form of government we will have in the future nor what we will have to face, but you can count on one thing--"The horses are coming!" You can read Rev. 6 and know the white horse rider of the antichrist is coming and his spirit is already in the world today. Also, it speaks of a red horse rider which may indicate the war of wars as the antichrist takes peace from the earth. Then, the black horse rider, representing famine which follows war and then the pale horse rider, representing death which follows war and famine. The horses are coming!

But before these, we, like Jeremiah, will face greater trials of faith. We will see 1) liberalism rampant in our government and supreme court, 2) partial birth abortion will be reinstated, 3) government will try to rid our country of our guns, 4) terrorist will infiltrate our country in a greater degree, 5) morality will greatly decline, 6) homosexuality will be more open and flaunted, 7) rebellion against authority, 8) socialism and humanism will soon be in control which means capitalism will be gone. These are just a few of many things too numerous to mention in this article. A total government controlled society is almost upon us and if we can not contend with the footmen, what will happen to us when the horses come. The horses are coming!

But Paul said Rom. 8: 18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." and our Lord said in Luke 12: 32: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." May the Lord help us to run with the footmen so that we may be able to contend with the

horses when they come, so that the Lord may get all the glory.

This is just a shorten version of a message preached in our church in November 2008. If you would like to have a tape or CD of the message, please let us know. It is free for the asking. If we can be of help in any way, please feel free to contact us.

THE PERSUADER - Jan.-March, 2009

WHAT IS TRUTH?

Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. John 18:37-38

Pilate asked Jesus this question when he was questioning Jesus in John 18:33-38. Sometimes we think we know what a word means and we may or may not have the right definition--spiritually speaking.

1. Truth defined.

Websters defines "truth as conformity to fact or reality" and "the true state of facts or things." The Bible is very clear concerning what truth is. John 17:17 says, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." John 14:6 states Jesus is the Truth. ("Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." John 14:6) Also I Tim. 3:15 refers to the church as being the pillar and the ground of truth. ("But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." I Tim. 3:15) These definitions are not contradictory. The written Word, as well as Jesus the living Word, is truth. A pillar is a support; therefore, the church, the true church, is to hold up the truth, both the written Word and the living Word, to a lost and dying world in sin. Thus, we need to preach the gospel of Christ which declares the truth.

2. Truth must be known.

There are two ways to know something. One is intellectually and the other is experientially. Thus, we must know or understand the facts before we can experience them. Spiritually, this takes study and guidance. We must study the Word of God and rightly divide it. ("Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." II Tim. 2:15) This requires the Holy Ghost who will only guide a person into truth. ("Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." John 16:13) If a person is walking contrary to the truth of the Word of God, it is evident he is not being guided by the Holy Ghost.

To know the truth is a must since we will be judged according to truth. ("But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things." Rom. 2:2; "And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge

the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word (which is truth) that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." John 12: 47-48) Therefore, the only way to be saved is to know truth. ("The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth." Psa. 145: 18; "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." II Thess. 2: 10; "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." II Thess. 2: 13; "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." Eph. 1: 13; "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." James 1: 18) These verses make it very clear that a person cannot be saved unless he hears the truth. Therefore, a person cannot be saved in just any "so called" church, even Baptist, if truth is not preached and that person guided by the Holy Ghost. II Tim. 3: 7 lets us know that knowledge of facts without guidance of the Holy Ghost will leave one outside the fold. ("Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." II Tim. 3: 7)

This is not talking about a "Word only" experience. One must believe the Word--the record, but life is not in the record but in the Son--the Truth. ("He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." I John 5: 10-12; "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." John 1: 4)

3. Truth must be practiced.

It is not just enough to proclaim the truth, but we must practice it as well. Herein lies the problem in many churches. They preach the facts of the gospel of Christ in their words but short circuit the work of the Holy Ghost in practice while dealing with men's souls. I Thess. 1: 5 is God's way and if you do not allow the Holy Ghost to finish His work of reproof (Holy Ghost conviction) in all three areas of John 16: 8-11 then you are wrong in your practice and in reality, you negate all you say. ("For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake." I Thess. 1: 5; "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." John 16: 8-11)

4. Without truth one will be doomed forever.

II Thess. 2: 11-12 plainly declares that a person would be damned if he believed not the truth. ("And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." II Thess. 2: 11-12) This is referring to more than just believing some facts as those did whom Jesus spoke to in John 8: 31-32. ("Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.") But this group refused to heed the Lord's promise and our Lord said to them in John 8: 44, "Ye are of your father the

devil"--doomed forever because they would not come to the Truth that they might have life. In John 5:39-40 Jesus told the Pharisees that they would not have eternal life because they would not come to the Truth--Jesus. ("Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." John 5:39-40)

The Lord desires you to come to the truth that you might be saved ("Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." I Tim. 2:4) and walk in truth. ("I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." III John 4)

These are just a few thoughts on truth. I hope to whet your appetite to understand more and be guided by the Holy Ghost into complete truth. We have two series of CDs or tapes designed in such a way that the Holy Ghost can use to guide you into truth. The series are called "**The Road of Light for Seeking Sinners and Studying Saints**" and "**The Fundamentals of the Narrow Way.**" We would be glad to send them to you without charge--just for the asking. May the Lord enlighten you would be our prayer. In Jesus' name. Amen!

THE PERSUADER - April-June 2009

MUST ONE REPENT TO BE SAVED?

I must answer this question at the beginning of this article with a resounding "Yes!" My heart has been torn due to so many today who would answer this question "No." Like Jude, I would like to write concerning our common salvation but I must "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3) especially concerning repentance. "Earnestly contend" means to agonize in defense of, to strive or fight strenuously in defense of, and speaks of a vigorous, intense, determined struggle to defeat the opposition.

There is no doubt that we are living in the Laodicean church age with the Lord ready to spue many out of His mouth (Rev. 3:16: "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.") because they are preaching and teaching that repentance is not needed for a sinner to be saved. Some even say repentance is not for a saved man. Lord help us! To say such is really "taking away from the words of this book." (Rev. 22:18) I know in context that applies to the book of Revelation but it also has an application to the entire Bible. The Lord also said in that verse if one takes away from this book "God shall take away his part out of the books of life" which means such a one is not saved. This does not mean he can be lost after he was saved. It means he was never saved.

The Bible has much to say about repentance being necessary in one's life for them to be saved. The Lord made this very plain in Luke 13:3 & 5: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." He even commanded the church to preach repentance in Luke 24:46-47: "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Even Paul, after he turned to the Gentiles, reminded the elders of Ephesus what he taught them and testified both to the Jews and Gentiles. (Acts 20:20-21: "And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from

house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”)

There are those who claim that anyone who preaches repentance for salvation is preaching works for salvation. They are so blinded. (II Cor. 4:3-4: “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”) A person cannot repent until God grants repentance to him. That comes about by godly sorrow working repentance in a person. (II Cor. 7:10: “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”) For those who do not know what godly sorrow is--it is deep God caused sorrow over your sin against God. This can be called a part of Holy Ghost conviction which is necessary for one to be saved. The sad thing about this is that many of those who do not believe in repentance to be saved do not believe salvation is a work of Holy Ghost conviction. Such are not saved themselves. (Mat. 15:14: “Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.”)

Charles H. Spurgeon is revered as the “prince of preachers” by many including those who do not believe in repentance to be saved. Bro. Spurgeon has many sermons in print which deal with repentance necessary for salvation. One such sermon entitled “Faith and Repentance Inseparable” was preached on July 13, 1862 at the Metropolitan Tabernacle from Mark 1:15: “And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”

Another man of God who preached in the mid 1900's gave this definition of repentance: “Repentance is an awakened sinner giving up all pretension to righteousness and natural goodness, and taking his place as an utterly lost, wicked, condemned, hell-deserving sinner at the feet of a Holy God realizing his only hope is for God to pardon him and forgive him for Jesus sake. Whether it takes the Holy Spirit a few days, a few weeks, or even years, to bring a sinner to that place, he must be brought there or he will never be saved. The sinner who never comes to that place never gets saved.”

Some say repentance is just a “change of mind.” It is, but it is more. It is also a change of direction, a change of attitude, a turning from sin, self, and the world and turning to the Lord, taking up sides with Him against yourself. A person cannot and will not do that without a completed work of Holy Ghost conviction. (John 16:8-11: “And when he is come, he will reprove (conviction) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”)

“Repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ.” Some say that all a person has to do to be saved is just believe. But faith without repentance is a structure in mid-air, without a foundation and that will not stand. If you deny repentance as being necessary for one to be saved then you are not saved. If you make light of any preacher who preaches repentance, then you are not saved. The Bible is very plain about this subject. I pray that you will get honest about your condition before God and allow the Holy Ghost to work in you repentance and faith so that you might be saved while there is an open door, a preacher of righteousness, and a striving Spirit.

This is only a skeleton article on the subject of repentance. If you would like to hear or read more in depth on this subject just ask us for more material and we will be glad to send it to you free of charge. “He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit sayeth.” (Rev. 2:7a)

LEARN TO CONTEND IN 2010

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Jude 3

The dictionary defines "contend" to mean to strive for or strive against; to use earnest efforts to obtain; to defend; to reprove sharply (to strive to convince). There are some things we need to be against and some things we need to be for. Therefore, they are worth striving against or for which ever the case may be.

I. Some things to strive against.

"Contend" in our text comes from the fierce competition of athletes contending in a contest striving to win. "Earnestly contend" means to fight strenuously in defense of and speaks of a vigorous, intense determined struggle to defeat the opposition.

1. Strive against temptation.

You had better strive against temptation or you will be overcome. (James 1:13-15) Paul said in Eph. 6:13 that there is a time to stand and in I Cor. 6:18, 10:14, II Tim. 2:22 that there are some things to flee from. He also said in I Cor. 9:27 that he had to contend (buffet his body) to keep from being overcome. Temptation leads you into the world and away from the Lord. Thus, we are commanded in I John 2:15 "Love not the world" and in Rom. 12:2 "Be not conformed to the world." To obey we must strive (contend) against temptation or we too will be overcome.

2. Strive against error.

To strive against error involves striving against the people who promote error. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Eph. 5:11 "Reprove" implies to contend. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." Isa. 58:1 Paul told Timothy in II Tim. 4:1-2 to reprove in his preaching--means to contend against error and those who promote it.

3. Strive against our real enemy.

Our real enemy, as well as the Lord's, is the devil. (Eph. 6:12) Therefore, we need to strive against some things.

II. Some things to strive for.

1. Strive for the faith.

Our text says so. "The faith" is the whole body of revealed truth delivered once to the saints. To strive for the faith involves:

1) Striving for the truth.

One must encounter truth to be saved. "The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. Psalms 145:18. Isaiah 59:14 says "Truth is fallen in the street;" therefore, we must contend for truth.

2) Striving for the gospel.

The gospel is "the power of God unto salvation." (Romans 1:16) I Corinthians 15:3-4 states that the gospel is the "death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus." The gospel includes the virgin birth, His sinless life, His vicarious death, His burial, His resurrection, His ascension, His ministry of intercession, His bodily coming back in the rapture for His saints, and the sanctification work of the Holy Spirit in one being saved. We must contend for the gospel so it will come to a person "not in word only, but in power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." (I Thessalonians 1:5) The sad thing today is that many have removed from the true gospel to a false one like Paul told the saints in Galatia in Galatians 1:6-9.

3) Striving for the old paths.

In Jeremiah 6:16 the prophet told the people to "ask for the old paths and walk therein." But they said, "We will not walk therein." We must **Learn To Contend in 2010.**

2. Striving for harmony in the home.

"Husband, love your wives as Christ love the church and gave Himself for it." (Ephesians 5:25) Our homes need to be in Bible order. Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go." This involves example, instruction, and discipline. (We have a series of cds available on the home just for the asking.)

3. Striving for modesty in your dress.

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array." I Timothy 2:9 "In like manner" means the man, as well as the woman, should dress in modest apparel. This is not legalism or law but Bible and it is right.

4. Striving for a closer walk with God.

The Bible states plainly in Genesis 5 and 6 that Enoch and Noah walked with God. And we can too. James 4:8 says, "Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you." John 15:4, 7 says, "Abide" in Him. "Abide" means to have no known sin unjudged and unconfessed, no interest into which He is not brought, no life which He cannot share, to take all burdens to Him, and draw all wisdom, life, and strength from Him.

Strive for a closer walk:

1) In His word.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Psalm 119:105

2) In prayer.

"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Matthew 6:6

3) In obedience.

Jesus said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." John 15:14 and "His commandments are not grievous." (I John 5:2-3) May we strive to neck reign to our Lord's

commands.

5. Striving in salvation.

1) Your own if not saved.

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. Luke 13:24 Remember one of the definitions of "contend" was to use earnest efforts to obtain. This is not talking about works for salvation but striving to overcome all the obstacles, the devil, the flesh, and the world places in your way to hinder you. This means earnest, active seeking and continuing in His word. (John 8:31-32)

2) Of others.

If you are saved you need to intercede for others. Stay with them where they are and love them so they may be drawn into the fold of God by those cords of love spoken of in Hos. 11:4.

Learn To Contend in 2010 that some may get in. In Jer. 12:5, Jeremiah said there is a problem--if you can't contend with the footman, how can you expect to contend with the horses? He is saying if you can't keep up in a footrace, you will not make it in a horse race. In other words, things were going to get worse for Israel and they did. Applied to us, I believe we are going to face greater trials in the future than we have in the past. Therefore, we need to **Learn to Contend in 2010**.

This is just a skeletal outline of the message preached January 3, 2010 at New Hope Baptist. If you would like for us to send you a cd or tape of this message, we would be glad to do so at no cost to you. We also have some more material at no charge that might help you to **Learn To Contend in 2010**. If I can be of any help to you please feel free to contact me. I will be your friend in 2010.

THE PERSUADER - Oct.-Dec., 2009

WHY DO YOU NOT BELIEVE?

"Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." Mark: 1:14-15

In the beginning of our Lord's ministry, He preached that there were two things we must do to be saved--repent and believe. By the way, our Lord never changed His message and these ingredients are still necessary. In a previous paper I wrote of the need to repent. In this issue I would like to deal with the need to believe. If you are not saved I want to ask you, "Why do you not believe?"

Andrew Murray wrote a book that asks the same question, "Why do you not believe?" In the introduction he gave a strong rebuke to some in his church for not yet arriving at faith--not believing. Some who had picked up the book, after reading the introduction, put it back down and did not continue to read due to this rebuke. But, if they had continued, they would have read what the author told them to do in order for them to believe.

For one to be saved, he must believe and that involves exercising faith. The question

then comes, "What kind of faith?" There is an intellectual faith, which will lead to a seeking faith, which will lead to a saving faith, if you will continue. In John 8: 30 the Bible states that many of the Jews believed on Jesus and He told them to continue in His Word if they expected to be His disciples truly. ("Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8: 31-32) They didn't continue in His Word and they were not saved. ("Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." John 8: 44) They possessed an intellectual faith and maybe a seeking faith, but they never possessed a saving faith.

The tense of the verb believe in Mark 1: 15 is present tense in the Greek and it means a continuous action, habitual lifestyle. Thus, if a person ever believes by exercising saving faith, he does not just believe today, but tomorrow and forever. That speaks of eternal security and the Greek tense brings this out. For example in John 3: 16, the word "believeth" is used and that is a present tense life style--continuous action. In the KJV, when a verb ends with "eth," it denotes a present tense verb. Yet, not all present tense verbs end with "eth." Therefore, in our text the Lord commands us to repent and believe with saving faith being exercised.

He even sent the Holy Spirit to reprove, convince, and convict of the sin of unbelief. ("And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me." John: 16: 8-9) "On" means to come to a point, place, and time with a purpose--to repent and exercise saving faith. And still many are not saved--have not exercised saving faith.

Why do you not believe? I want to try to help us see what the answer to this question is. I don't have all the answers but I will try to give you some examples from the Bible that may help you.

1. Because the Lord Jesus is not yet revealed to you.

In John 9 there is a story of a man born blind so that the works of God would be manifest in Him. Jesus came by and healed his blindness and the Jews cast him out of the synagogue because of the testimony he gave. Then Jesus past by and asked him did he believe on the Son of God? ("Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" John 9: 35) This "believe" is a present tense verb. The man answered, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" John 9: 36 The man did not understand for he used the aorist tense (point action) of the verb "believe"--not saving faith. Then Jesus revealed Himself to him. ("And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." John 9: 37) And now the man said "Lord, I believe"--present tense, thus, he exercised saving faith and was saved. (John 9: 38)

The Lord Jesus is hidden in the bosom of the Father and it takes a completed work of Holy Ghost reproof for you to really see Him. And when that work is completed, repentance will be granted to you, saving faith will be given to you, and the Lord Jesus will be revealed to you and then you can repent and believe the gospel and the Lord will get all the glory. The Lord has to give all these things to you for salvation is of the Lord. ("John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven." John 3: 27)

2. What is hindering the Lord from being revealed to you?

I want to list some of those things. I'll just give a basic condensed outline and the scripture to back it up.

1) Your failure to continue in His word. John 8:31-32

This is equivalent to "Do what you know to do at the time" and "Step in what light you have and the Lord will give you more light." To continue implies obedience and if you are not making an attempt to obey, then you will never come to the place the Lord will reveal Himself to you and you will die and go to hell. There are some things in the Scripture that are very plain that the Lord expects us to obey.

- A. Love not the world--system. I John 2:15; Rom. 12:2; Luke 14:26
- B. Strive to enter in. Luke 13:24
- C. Attending church. Heb. 10:25
- D. Tithing and then giving an offering. Mal. 3:8-10; I Cor. 16:2; Mat. 23:23--even lost ought to.
- E. Dress in modest apparel. II Tim. 2:9; Phil. 1:27

2) Don't have an ear to hear. Mat. 13:9

- A. Deceived. Jer. 17:4
- B. Blinded. II Cor. 4:3-4

3) Allowed the Devil to give you a false profession. Mat. 13:20-21

4) Will not let the gospel plow up the soil of your heart and make it good ground. Mat. 23:23

5) Will not get honest with yourself and the Lord. Luke 8:15

6) Will not keep the seed. Luke 8:15

- A. Allow the devil to steal the seed. Mat. 13:19
- B. All thorns to choke seed out.
 - a. Cares of this world. Mat. 13:22
 - b. Deceitfulness of riches. Pro. 11:28; I Tim. 6:10
 - c. Pleasures of this life. Luke 8:14
 - d. Lust of other things. Mark 4:19
- C. Failure to understand. Mat. 13:23; John 6:45 (learned means to understand)

7) Apathy--unconcerned (indifference) about the light God gives you. (Rom. 1:19-20) Indifference leads to ingratitude. (Rom. 1:21a; I Thess. 5:18) Ingratitude leads to ignorance. (Rom. 1:21b-22) Ignorance leads to idolatry. (Rom. 1:23) Idolatry leads to immorality. (Rom. 1:24-28) Immorality leads to total ruin.

8) Not willing to pay the price to be His disciple. Luke 14:26,27,33

9) Do not want a Lord. John 6:53

10) Do not see enough in others who say they are saved to believe the Lord loves and cares for you. Psa. 142:4

11) May be stuck in the slough of despond and the way back seems better.

12) May not have even been awakened. Rom. 3:18

You may be like the harlot in Pro. 30:20 who wiped her mouth and said "I have done no wickedness." You have heard the truth preached and you failed to even try to obey and say "I have done no wickedness." Take inventory. Your future depends on it. Repent and believe the gospel. If you do not make an attempt to do so, you will die in your sins and spend an eternity in hell. You do not want that. I do not want that for you and Christ does not want that, because He died for you on Calvary to pay your sin debt. I beg you to continue and obey the light He has so graciously given you so that you can come to a point in your life He will manifest Himself to you and enable you to believe on Him and be saved. You need to be like the man who told Jesus in Mark 9:24. "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief."

This is just a skeletal outline of a series of seven messages just preached at New Hope Baptist. If you would like this series on cd's and some more material on this subject please feel free to contact us. All our material is free of charge. (Pro. 23:23) This series is in the process of being put on our web site www.thepersuader.org. Go to our site and click on "Video messages" to view and hear this message as well as others. If I can be of help in any way, please feel free to contact me. I care for your soul.

THE PERSUADER - Jan.-April 2009

MUST I RELOCATE TO BE SAVED?

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it." Amos 8:11-12

The setting of these verses reveals Amos, a prophet from Judah, the Southern Kingdom, was prophesying to the Northern Kingdom called Israel. Jeroboam had become king of the Northern Kingdom about 165 years before, when the 12 tribes of Israel were split, after Solomon's reign into the Northern Kingdom and Southern Kingdom. Deut. 16:16 stated that all the men of Israel were to appear before the Lord three times a year in Jerusalem to worship. ("Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty.") Jeroboam knew that if this happened the heart of the people would turn to Rehoboam, king of the Southern Kingdom and that he would be killed. So he set up substitute worship in Bethel and Dan by making two calves of gold--idols--for the people to worship. (I Kings 12:26-29: "And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two

calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan.")

What Jeroboam started was continued by the next 12 kings of the Northern Kingdom and the nation waxed worse and worse. And there came a time God sent Amos to prophesy in Israel. He prophesied against all nations around Israel, including Judah, before he said anything against Israel. No doubt the people agreed with Amos while he was speaking against the other nation's sin. But when he spoke against Israel, the priest of Bethel told Amos to go back home and prophesy there--we don't want to hear what you have to say. (Amos 7: 12-13: "Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: But prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court.")

Amos continued to prophesy, basically stating a famine was coming. (verse 11 in our text) A famine is usually a time of testing. The famine he spoke of was a famine of hearing the words of the Lord. This could involve two things. First, that the word (truth) was not being proclaimed in Israel. This was true for they were worshiping idols. This could apply to us today for there is not a lot of truth preached and truth is sure not practiced much in our day. Second, the people did not have an ear to hear, a spiritual ear. Eight times in the Bible Jesus said, "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." (Mat. 13:9) If you study the history of Israel, there had been two great prophets that proclaimed truth--Elijah and Elisha. Even in Elijah's day he got to the point that he thought he was the only one standing for truth, but the Lord said 7000 had not bowed a knee to Baal. ("And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." I King 19: 14,18) The Lord has always had a witness and He always will.

Amos's prophecy stated plainly that there would come a time that the people would look for the Word of the Lord and not be able to find it. (verse 12 in our text) The Lord has put an emptiness inside of man that cannot be satisfied with anything but God. So some men begin to look for the Word to find satisfaction. They will wander to the north--probably refers to going up to Dan since Bethel was in the south where Amos was. They will not find satisfaction at the other golden calf. They will go to the east, which is the place of all kinds of pagan religions. They will not find it there. You may say west is not mentioned but it is--from sea to sea. The Mediterranean Sea was to the west. In essence Amos said you shall wander north, east, and west and not find the Word of the Lord--no truth in the land and no ears to hear.

Notice, he did not mention south. What is south? Jerusalem and the temple--a place to meet God and where truth was. Uzziah was king at this time. II Chron. 26:4 says, "And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah did." Truth was in the South at Jerusalem. Why would they not go south? Because they had worshiped the golden calf for 165 years and their minds were captured by tradition. Even Judah in Jeremiah's day said, "We will not walk in the old paths"--they would not find the truth--old paths. (Jer. 6:16: "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.") These people are no different from people today. We are warned not to be captured by tradition and yet we are as a whole. (Col. 2:8: "Beware

lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.") We like the way we are--no ears to hear and do not want the truth. In fact when truth comes, many call it a new doctrine. No! No! Just the old, old story of truth. We have a famine of hearing the words of the Lord.

Since this is the case, what do I need to do? **Must I relocate to be saved?** I am hearing some say "You will not be saved where you are, you must come to our place." And they will tell you, "You must move to be saved--relocate. You are not going to get help where you are." They will tell you to move where truth is preached and practiced. It is true you must have truth preached and practiced for you to be saved but do you need to relocate? In some cases you may have to and in other cases you may not have to. The bottom line is you must find the divine will of God for you. What does the Lord want you to do? You need to beware of these preachers who tell you what the will of God is for your life.

Abraham relocated to Egypt when a famine came. I know it was a time of testing and not for salvation, but he got in trouble. His wife brought back Hagar and we still have trouble from that today. The problem was Abraham did not stay where the Lord told him to stay.

Naomi and her husband left the house of bread (Bethlehem) when a famine came. She thought she did not have anything and went to Moab only 30 miles away. After ten years she went back confessing she went out full and came back empty. She lost her husband and two sons.

Cornelius in Acts 10 did not have to relocate to be saved. He had responsibility as a centurion in Caesarea. He was a Gentile and also lost--dead in trespasses and sins. We could say he had two strikes against him, yet he did not have to relocate to be saved for he did what was right where he was and God sent an angel to tell him how to get Peter, the human instrument, who told him words whereby he might be saved.

The Eunuch in Acts 8 did not have to relocate to be saved. He was in search of God and went to Jerusalem to find Him and didn't. But on the way home, God sent the human instrument, Philip, who preached to him Jesus and he was saved and then he went back home to his people. We were told by our guides in Jerusalem in 1975 that the Eunuch was instrumental in a Baptist Church being started in his home land.

When people talk about relocating to New Hope Baptist Church, as pastor it scares me. I have never told anyone to move here but I have told them to do what the Lord says. After all, what do we have here? I know truth is preached and practiced, which is good and right, but you need to realize that we are not experiencing a great move of God. In fact, I do not know of any place right now in America that is. Seems we are having a famine of hearing the word of God. Also, I do not know how many years I have left to preach and pastor. We do not know what tomorrow holds. I ask the church recently if I had to leave for whatever the reason, "What kind of pastor would you call? Would you settle for a preacher who would not preach and practice the truth?" I'm afraid they would for some are tired of the manna--tired of truth. The reason I say that is because I have seen other churches call pastors who practiced easy believism and go in a different direction than God wanted them to. Folks, we are in a mess across this nation.

Must I relocate to be saved? You had better find the mind of God. Do not listen to any preacher who will tell you that you must move to their place. That is not right. You had better try the spirits that are telling you what you need to do about relocating. You need to know what you are doing if you decide to relocate.

The culture is different just a few miles away even in our country. The work ethic is different and the economy is different. You need to be careful or you will get out on a limb and

the devil will saw it off.

You say I'm 99 % sure. That is not enough. You need to be 110% sure before you relocate. Be careful or you will be like Naomi and lose everything you have.

As I was studying this message, I realized I did not have to relocate. I grew up in a church that did not have a whole lot of the power of God present. Oh, they had truth in word but I did not have an ear to hear and there was not enough power to quicken my spiritual ear to hear. Some way, some how, I went south. I'm not saying you have to go south but I did. I went south to Camp Zion, Myrtle, MS. The power of God was there and the gift to preach that God had placed in me got stirred. I do not understand all that but I went south where the power of God was and He knit my heart with the human instrument God used in my life. He came and preached, and he came and preached, and he came and preached. Are you listening? After I was saved he told me some of the things he had told me when he first came but I didn't hear him. He loved me where I was and little by little I began to hear. That is why we try to bring in those who preach and practice the truth--they are fresh to you. But if you had them every day, you would get tired of the manna.

You do not need to relocate unless you are sure what God's will is. When you come to a meeting, there may be a spiritual high. But after the meeting you can not get a holy grunt out of anybody. That is kind of the way it was at Camp Zion. You do not need to check the place out only in a meeting. Spend some time there in the day by day routine and stay for some time before you make up your mind to relocate. Find out what God wants you to do. He may want to save you where you are so you can be instrumental in starting something there.

Thank the Lord I did not have to relocate to be saved. The maniac of Gadara wanted to go with Jesus after he was saved. I can understand that. Everybody in his area knew he had run naked through the graveyards. No doubt when they saw him later, they pointed and whispered "That's him." But Jesus told him, "...Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." (Mark 5:19) It would have been easier to have gone somewhere else.

There was a time in my life that there were three preachers in three states at three different churches, all at the same time, telling me I was suppose to be with them. I did not know what to do. I was at Camp Zion again for a week and an impression came to me that I should start a print shop where I lived. I told my wife about it when I got home and she said she had the same impression. Three days later I bought a print shop just eight miles from my house and proceeded to build a building to house it. The print shop was not profitable but it kept me in this basic area so that I was ready to go to New Hope Baptist Church when they called me as pastor. If I had relocated I would have been out of the will of God.

The Lord put me at New Hope right in the middle of all the preachers that knew me and had figured out what was wrong with me, at least they thought they had. It would have been easier to have gone out west to new territory where nobody knew me and start afresh. But that was not the right thing to do for that was not God's will.

Must I relocate to be saved? Only if it is God's will, otherwise, be still and ask God to give you an ear to hear and the Lord will visit you in His time in salvation. You may have to come to the meetings, like the men of Israel had to go to Jerusalem three times a year, to get truth and carry it back to your home, state, country, or where ever and see something get started where you are. I'm saying you may. I do not know what you will have to do.

I am trying to let you know I'm scared when someone says they are coming to New Hope.

You must be in the will of God or you will get out on a limb and the devil will saw it off and you will hurt yourself, your family, and the cause of Christ.

If it is God's will for you to relocate to New Hope, I will do whatever is necessary to help you. You will need help if you relocate. There are a lot of voices that will lead you astray. You need to hear God's voice, find His will, and do it.

This is just some of the thoughts dealt with in this message preached at New Hope Baptist Church. If you would like a CD or DVD of this message, please feel free to contact us. All our material is free of charge. (Pro. 23:23) If I can be of help in any way, please feel free to contact me. I care for your soul.

THE PERSUADER - May-Dec., 2010

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you. I Peter 1:18-20

We are living in a day when you hear a lot about "The Plan of Salvation." Some will tell you it is "The Roman Road," while others say it is "The Four Spiritual Laws," and others say it is "Praying the Sinner's prayer." On and on we could go about different plans of salvation that men have devised. But what does the Bible say "The Plan of Salvation" is? No where in the Bible does it say this is "The Plan of Salvation." Yet, there are Bible principles that reveal to us "God's Plan of Salvation." We could say it is of:

Sovereign Design

"Sovereign" simply means chief, supreme, and above all others. This refers to God, for there is no other God (Mark 12:32: ". . .there is one God; and there is none other but he." I Cor. 8:6: ". . .we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.") God had many types and pictures in the OT but all these pictured the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son. Noah's ark had only one door and that pictures Jesus, who is the door--the only way to safety. (John 10:9: "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.") The OT sacrifices could not take away sin (Heb. 10:1: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."), but they pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ, whom John the Baptist said "would take away the sin of the world." (John 1:29) We are chosen in Him before the foundation of the world as our text and Eph. 1:4 brings out. (Eph. 1:4: "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.") Therefore, Jesus is no afterthought as some say. This involves the foreknowledge of God which we cannot fully understand. (Isa. 55:9: "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.") Jesus' shed blood has always been the only way men are redeemed and

will be redeemed (our text bears this out). There is no other way. "God's Plan of Salvation" is of Sovereign design and of the:

Saviour's Doing

Our Lord, the sinless Son of God, gave Himself for our sins on Calvary's cross. (Gal. 1:4: "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." Isa. 50:6: "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.") He lay down His life for sinners because He loved us. (Rom. 5:8: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." John 10:17-18: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.") He endured the cross for the joy set before Him--seeing sinners saved because of His supreme sacrifice. (Heb 12:2: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Isa. 53:5-6: "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.") "God's Plan of Salvation" is of the Saviour's doing and also of the:

Spirit's Delivery

Our Lord said that He would send the Holy Spirit and that He would reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. (John 16:8: "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.") "Reprove" means to lay blame on with the purpose of correction. This is what we refer to as Holy Ghost conviction which is necessary for one to be saved. The work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of a sinner is also called the "sanctification of the Spirit." (II Thess. 2:13: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.) This is the setting apart work of the Holy Spirit which brings a sinner to the point he can obey the gospel. To obey is to repent and believe the truth. This can only occur when the Holy Spirit grants repentance and saving faith. Anything short of His completed work will produce a false profession--a tare. "God's plan of Salvation" is of the Spirit's delivery and the:

Sinner's Doom

Every person who had reached the knowledge of accountability is a child of wrath (Eph. 2:3: "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.") and that wrath abides on him. (John 3:36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.") That wrath is God's judgment, hell, and the lake of fire and will fall on every person who rejects the light (truth) God so graciously sends his way. Thus, the sinner who does not come God's way in salvation will be doomed in the lake of fire when he stands before the Great White Throne of Judgment. (Rev. 20:15: "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.") "God's Plan of Salvation," if rejected, is the sinner's doom but it is the:

Seeker's Delight

Some say no man seeks God and that is true of the natural man. (Rom. 3:11: "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.") But when sinners are awakened, they are told to seek and they will. (Mat. 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.") When they do seek, they will be rewarded for doing so. (Heb. 11:6: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.") The Holy Spirit will teach sinners as they travel the narrow way to the strait gate. (Psa. 25:8: "Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.") And our Lord is good to those who do so. (Rom. 2:4: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?") Seeker's can delight in the promises of God. (I Thess. 5:24: "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." Phil 1:6: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." John 8:31-32: "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.") "God's Plan of Salvation" is the seekers delight and also the:

Saint's Delight

Our Lord promised He would come back for all those who are His--those saved. (John 14:1-3: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." I Thess. 4:16-17: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.") He also said "with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." (Isa. 12:3) That is the saints delight!

"God's Plan of Salvation" is the only plan that will produce genuine converts. So I believe I'll just stay with Him and His plan of salvation.

This is just a skeletal outline of some series of messages preached at New Hope Baptist Church. If you would like the CD's of these series, please feel free to contact us. All our material is free of charge. (Pro. 23:23) If I can be of help in any way, please feel free to contact me. I care for your soul. ELP

THE PERSUADER - Jan.-June, 2011

STOP AND THINK

When trying to decide what to write in this paper, it seems the thought kept coming--**Stop and think!** I do not have a specific scripture that I would use for a text for this subject but the principles and application that I want to make are scriptural. **Stop and think!**

When I was trying to teach my Grand boys to drive the tractor while raking, baling, or

hauling the wheat straw we put up each year, I found this phrase come up a lot. **Stop and think!** It is easy to get to a place while learning to drive a tractor that you forget what to do next. The fence is coming up, do I turn right or left? What do I do now? **Stop and think!** Hit the hand clutch on the D-17 Allis Chalmers tractor and then the brakes and the tractor will stop. Then think--what am I suppose to do next.

To think means to revolve in the mind, to meditate on, to dwell on something in thought. Our children have grown up in a world that has captured their minds to the extent that they cannot think for themselves. Those who do not stop and think for themselves in life are headed for trouble.

Concerning temptation James. 1: 13-15 says: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." In context this is solicitation to do evil. God is not the author of that but the devil is. Temptation is an enticement to evil by the offer of some real and apparent good. Notice "every man is tempted." And these temptations come in various forms and entices one to yield to the temptation. What do you need to do? **Stop and think!**

Temptation is not sin within itself. For instance, the first image of something that comes to your mind about something that is against God is not sin, but holding on to that image and reviewing it over and over in your mind is sin. You need to **stop and think**.

Pro. 9: 17 says: "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." "Stolen waters" is a metaphor (a word expressing comparison) referring to an adulterous relationship. This is in contrast to "Drink water out of thine own cistern" (Pro. 5:15), a phrase referring to have one's natural impulses satisfied in the legitimate sphere of marriage. ("For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn." I Cor. 7: 7-10 "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Heb. 13:4

Every normal man is tempted in this area. Even Paul was for he was given a thorn in the flesh who he called "the messenger of Satan." And he asked the Lord to remove that thorn three times and the Lord would not but said "My grace is sufficient." ("And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." II Cor. 12: 7-9) Thus, every time he was tempted what did he do? **Stopped and thought** and acted accordingly. ("But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." I Cor. 9:27) He had to literally slap his body into subjection and he told Timothy to "Flee youthful lusts." in II Tim. 2:22. Paul is a good example to follow.

Stop and think when temptation comes. **Stop and think** about the marriage vows taken--to be true to your mate until death parts you.

Stop and think about what divorce would do to those around you. Think about the adultery it would cause you and your wife to commit. If you are younger you would not stay single nor would she and all intimate acts committed by you and her would be adulterous.

("And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." Mark 10:12) And the same would be true if man was to put away his wife and marry another--he committeth adultery.

Stop and think! You may say, "but I am not hurting anyone but myself." Think about the hurt to your mate. Think about the hurt to your parents or to your children which ever be the case. Think about the cause of Christ. II Sam. 12:14 states: "Howbeit, because by this deed (the adultery David committed) thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die." If you say you are saved and a man of God you need to think about the influence of your error causing others to fall in the same ditch as you.

Stop and think about life after death. ("And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Heb. 9:27) Think about having to face God at the judgment--judgment seat of Christ if you are saved. ("For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." II Cor. 5:10) Think about the loss of rewards ("Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." II John 8) and the possibility of having nothing to cast back at Jesus' feet. If you are lost, think about the judgment you will have to face--the Great White Throne. ("And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." Rev. 20:11) Think about the word you will hear from the Lord after you make all of your excuses of Mat. 7:22-23. ("Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.")

Stop and think when you are dealing with the souls of men for their soul will live some where forever. Think if you lead them to pray a prayer without a complete work of Holy Ghost conviction that your actions when dealing with them may cause them to be made twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. ("Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." Mat. 23:15) Think of bloody hands we will have if we do not practice the truth of the gospel when dealing with other's souls.

Just as I taught my grand boys that if they got in a tight spot while working in the field--**stop and think** before they proceed on and if they can not think what to do, turn the key off and call for help.

Spiritually speaking, we need to **stop and think** when we don't know which way to turn and if it does not come to us right then, call for help. That is what pastors are for--to help those who **stop and think** and realize they need help.

This is just some thoughts put together to cause you to **stop and think**. We have several series of messages preached at New Hope Baptist Church that would cause you to **stop and think**. If you would like to receive them, please feel free to contact us. All our material is free of charge. (Pro. 23:23) If I can be of help in any way, please feel free to contact me. I care for your soul. I beg you to please **STOP AND THINK!**

THE PERSUADER - July-Dec., 2011

UNDERSTANDING

But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and **understandeth** it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Mat.13:23

Understanding means to set or bring together. It refers to the special faculty of intelligence or insight which discriminates between the false and the true, and grasp relations in which things stand to each other. This is like putting the pieces of a puzzle together where you can get a view of the entire picture. I want to deal with spiritual **understanding** in this article.

There is a lot of misunderstanding about **understanding**. Or I could say there is a lot of ignorance about **understanding**. Ignorance is defined by Webster's as uninstructed, uninformed, untaught or unenlightened. Many are unenlightened about **understanding** possibly due to the fact of having their minds captured by tradition (Col. 2:8: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.") which causes them to have preconceived ideas about **understanding** that are contrary to the Bible.

Rom. 3:11 says, "There is none that **understandeth**, there is none that seeketh after God." Yet our text states plainly that all the good ground hearers **understandeth**. Is this a contradiction? No, for the Bible does not contradict itself. Therefore, we must find what each verse means in context. Romans 3:11 is in the midst of several verses that are describing a natural lost man--he does not **understand** because he has not been enlightened about the ways of the Lord. Mat. 13:23 is an explanation of the parable of the sower and the seed. The good ground hearers are the only ones saved in that parable and they "**understandeth**." This means that for a person to be saved he must have some **understanding**. One might ask, "how much?" Enough--about sin, righteousness, and judgment. ("And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." John 16:8-11)

There are many today who do not believe that a person has to **understand** anything to be saved. They are ignorant about **understanding**--not enlightened. The Bible makes it clear that there is a way that leads to life and that is the narrow way of Mat. 7:14 ("Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.") which is equivalent to the "way of **understanding**" mentioned in Pro. 21:16. ("The man that wandereth out of the way of **understanding** shall remain in the congregation of the dead.") A person who will not walk in that way--will not allow the Holy Ghost to plow their hard heart and make it good ground, will "remain in the congregation of the dead." This means he will not be saved.

Now, some will say "God does not show a lost person anything." But, the Bible makes it clear that the Lord will teach the sinner (the lost) in the way--the narrow way that leads to life where sinners are enlightened whereby they have enough **understanding** about sin, righteousness, and judgment to be saved. (Psa. 25:8: "Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.") For a person to make such a statement as just mentioned shows that he is ignorant of **understanding**.

The Bible is clear in John 6:45 ("It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.") that before one ever "cometh" to the Lord Jesus, he has to have heard (must have ears to hear spiritual things; Mat. 13:9: "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.") and "learned of the Father." "Learned" is a translation of a Greek word that is also translated "**understood**." "Cometh" is continuous action in the Greek, thus meaning to have an habitual lifestyle of coming to the Lord for salvation. This involves walking in the way of **understanding** which can only be done by the enabling power of the holy Ghost. (1 Cor. 2:14: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."; John 6:44: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.")

Some would say that I'm teaching "progressive salvation." The answer to that is a definite NO! Salvation is at an instant but coming to the end of self and **understanding** enough about sin, righteousness, and judgment (Holy Ghost reproof, equivalent to Holy Ghost conviction) is necessary for one to be saved.

Some will adamantly disagree with this article. The reason being--they did not experience this probably due to the fact they called their experience of turning from the broad way to the narrow way the point where they were saved. But that is not salvation. It is only entering the way of **understanding** which leads to life. Therefore, they are ignorant of salvation.

Others will say **understanding** comes after one is saved. While it is true that a saved person will continue to grow and have a greater **understanding** of the things of God, it is also true that a lost person must have enough **understanding** about sin, righteousness, and judgment to become "good ground" and be saved.

This is only a skeletal outline of the thoughts concerning **understanding**. We have several series of messages dealing with the principles of this subject. If you would like some of the CDs, please feel free to contact us. All our material is free of charge. (Pro. 23:23; "Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and **understanding**.") Do not be like the Pharisees that turned and walked away after Jesus spoke the parable in Mat. 23. They did not **understand** and died and went to hell. Be like the disciples who drew close to Jesus and ask Him to tell them what He meant by the parable. Those who had ears to hear and **understood** enough about sin, righteousness, and judgment were made good ground and were saved. That is my desire for you. I care for your soul. Allow the Lord to give you **understanding** so that you might be saved.

THE PERSUADER - Jan.-June, 2012